

WASHINGTON TIMES
24 November 1983ARTICLE APPROVED
CUBAN 7A

Soviets seen using Pershing as excuse for new offensives

STAT

Yesterday's walkout by the Soviet Union from the Geneva talks on intermediate-range nuclear forces may be only the first in a series of countermeasures by Moscow to the arrival of new U.S. missiles in Western Europe this month. In the fourth article of his five-part series, Washington Times correspondent Ted Agres reports on what to expect next from the Kremlin leaders.

By Ted Agres
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

The Soviet Union plans to use NATO's deployment of U.S. Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe as an excuse to make strong military and strategic moves in several key areas of the world, senior U.S. officials and analysts say.

These moves are designed to accomplish a number of objectives. They are said to include:

- Strengthening Soviet military outreach in strategic "choke points" around the world;
- Weakening relations among NATO allies;
- Providing propaganda ammunition for use by Western "peace movements" in agitating against additional U.S. missile deployments in the next four years, during which the Pershing II and cruise missiles are to be installed;
- Seeking to portray the United States — particularly President Reagan — as the menace behind the so-called "arms race," thereby justifying additional Soviet military behavior.

Senior U.S. intelligence sources say sensitive cables intercepted last year indicated that the Soviets planned to use the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe as a pretext for their own military moves, starting next month.

Though the sources would not reveal the content of the intercepts, they appeared troubled by the extent of Moscow's planned counteractions.

In recent weeks, Soviet officials have warned that additional Soviet nuclear warheads would be targeted on U.S. cities. Analysts believe these would be deployed at bases in Siberia, Latin America or on submarines off the East coast.

The Soviets are likely to initiate a deliberate chilling of East-West relations as soon as U.S. missiles are installed in Britain and West Germany next month, the officials say.

As one senior military analyst put it, "It's going to be a cold, cold winter."

Added a senior White House expert: "The Soviets are in an intimidation mode, rather than a peace-offensive mode. Rather than emphasizing agreements and accords, they will keep up a drumbeat of propaganda suggesting war as the alternative."

The Soviets can be expected to continue this chill until the presidential elections, some analysts say. This is because they would see any accord, or even a mere summit, on nuclear arms during this time as something that would increase Mr. Reagan's chances for re-election.

Other analysts disagree that the Soviets would avoid a summit. They reason that because Mr. Reagan would likely reject a Soviet summit offer if circumstances were unfavorable, the Soviets just might suggest one, so as to make Mr. Reagan appear to be a "warmonger" to the voting public.

Some officials see an advantage in the cooling of relations. As one National Security Council staffer put it: "The fact that relations may be chilly is 'good' from the standpoint that there is no deception in the West as to Soviet intentions."

"The Soviets have been singing the praises of detente and 'normalized' relations while building up their arms capability and acquiring Western technology for their

military," the staffer said. "Relations based on appeasement are not 'good' relations."

Nevertheless, by maintaining maximum flexibility in their own plans on nuclear warhead deployment, the Soviets would be in a stronger position to negotiate with whatever U.S. administration takes office, analysts say.

Estimates differ among U.S. and NATO officials regarding specific Soviet reactions to deployment of the cruise and Pershing II missiles.

While Soviet negotiators yesterday broke off talks with the United States on limiting intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), officials here are divided as to how soon, if ever, the Soviets can be expected to return to the bargaining table.

Some say the Soviets are serious when they threaten to stay out of the Geneva talks.

Other officials, including Kenneth Adelman, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and Richard Perle, assistant secretary of defense, suggested the Soviets would return to the bargaining table after an initial walkout.

Most analysts maintain, however, that by quitting the INF talks the Soviets have effectively stepped up political pressure on NATO allies by groups within their own countries to end the "arms race."

Soviet actions can be expected to also include such previously announced steps as installation of additional SS-20 long-range nuclear missiles targeting Western Europe and positioning of new, shorter-range SS-21, SS-22 and SS-23 tactical nuclear weapons in East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Deployment of these new missiles has been expected as part of a "natural program of modernization," said Mr. Adelman.

"What will be different is that

new efforts on their part that were planned long ago will be called countermeasures, rather than part of the natural modernization," he added. "The label will be different, but the reality will be the same."

Other officials said that the Soviets already have deployed 30 SS-21 missiles in Eastern Europe and are continuing at the rate of one a week.

Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Dmitri Ustinov warned last week that deployment of U.S. missiles in Western Europe would trigger "appropriate" Soviet countermeasures, including "intercontinental